3: Hiscocks G-4, 5 (1946-1949) 1953 EK1 Austria EK1

Anschluss took place, Austria already had a good chance of becoming a viable State.

Politically the main achievement had been in the field of social legislation. Nowhere in Europe did the Socialist ideal find more impressive realization than in the legislative programme initiated by Ferdinand Hanusch, the Austrian Secretary of Social Administration between 1918 and 1920, and in the housing schemes carried out between the Wars by the Vienna municipality under Social Democratic control. These improvements gave the young Republic something to be proud of, something, moreover, which was associated with the difficult present rather than with the glorious past, and which directed attention to the possibilities of the future. Another political event of importance was the appeal for financial help made to the Allies by the Christian Socialist Chancellor, Monsignor Seipel, which led to the appointment of the League of Nations Commissioner. He was accused of being a traitor by his opponents, but his action established an important precedent in international collaboration. It showed that it was possible to combine patriotism with the acceptance of international control, an innovation of great significance for a small State like Austria.

In culture and sport the period also brought great success. The triumphs of the Austrian football team, the Vienna State Opera, and the Salzburg Festival stirred the pride and enthusiasm of the harassed Austrian people.

Anton Wildgans' *Rede über Österreich*, which was written in 1929, reflected the development of Austrian patriotism and Austria's sense of identity as a State. This great speech was intended for a foreign audience. But it was also a noble expression of patriotic faith. Its enthusiastic reception in Austria was a clear indication that it summed up ideas that were germinating in many Austrian minds.

Austria's growing self-consciousness and sense of independence were stimulated by Hitler's rise to power. Austrian Socialists had been in favour of union with a Germany in which Socialism and democracy were strong, but they had no

3: Hiscocks G-4, 5 (1946-1949) 1953 EK1 Austria EK1

were a pre-condition for the purchase of food from abroad, and undernourishment stood in the way of industrial recovery.

The food problem remained serious for at least three years. In 1947 it was often found impossible to honour the inadequate basic ration scales of 1,500 to 1,600 calories, and medical inspections established that nearly 50 per cent of Viennese school children were under-nourished. Until 1948, when Austria had its first good post-War harvest, the population as a whole remained noticeably under-fed. By then most people's savings had already been spent and their mental and physical powers of resistance had been seriously weakened.

In spite of this melancholy story, great efforts were made to deal with the situation. Had this not been the case, the prolonged deprivation and distress of the Austrian people would have ended inevitably in political disaster.

In the autumn of 1945 it was decided to invite the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration to organize a supply programme for Austria. The way had been prepared in August, when the UNRRA Council had decided that as Austria was a liberated country there was nothing to prevent relief and rehabilitation operations being undertaken there, provided the occupying Powers approved. At the time, however, the necessary funds were not available. In November the immediate initiation of an UNRRA programme was urged, particularly by the United Kingdom, and before the end of the month an UNRRA Working Party had arrived in Vienna to obtain preliminary information regarding requirements. In December UNRRA headquarters, following a request from the Allied Council, authorized negotiations for an agreement with the Austrian Government, subject to the Council's approval. Brigadier R. H. R. Parminter, who had been serving since September as chief of the UNRRA Displaced Persons Operations in Austria, took over the duties of Chief of Mission on the 1st of January 1946 and conducted the negotiations. An UNRRA Bureau was set up in the Austrian Federal Chancellery early in the New Year to co-ordinate the transport, administration, and distribution of UNRRA supplies. On the

3: Hiscocks G-4, 5 (1946-1949) 1953 EK1 Austria EK1

5th of April a formal agreement covering the relief programme was signed by Brigadier Parminter and the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Although it had originally been hoped that UNRRA would be in a position to start operations on the 1st of March, this estimate proved too optimistic. It was finally decided that the organization should assume its responsibilities by three stages in April, May, and June, the beginning of June being the date on which it should be responsible for the actual delivery of supplies. To make this programme possible the Chief of Mission obtained the promise of each of the four occupying Powers to do its best to make available one month's food supply for its own zone from stocks already in the country. Even in June UNRRA had to borrow supplies from the American and Soviet Elements.

Allied help, which had first been given in the summer of 1945, was thus continued in order to tide Austria over the transition period. Throughout the whole winter and spring the country was dependent on the Allies for food and other essential supplies. At the end of 1945 the Russians agreed to the export of food from their zone into Western Austria. Coal was brought in from Germany. Raw materials, vehicles, clothes, and medical equipment were provided. Military stores belonging to the German army were handed over to the Austrian Government.

The UNRRA administration in Austria lasted from the spring of 1946 until the end of June 1947. Its main work was the supply and distribution of food. From June 1946 until October, when the Austrian harvest became available, 80 per cent of the rations of the non-agricultural population were provided or paid for by UNRRA, and UNRRA supplies formed a substantial part of the rations so long as the administration lasted. The total value of the food supplied amounted to $81,206,600, in addition to $20 million that were paid to the Allied military authorities for food provided by them.

The second largest item on the UNRRA budget was in respect of agricultural supplies. After food itself, aid to increase

3: Hiscocks G-4, 5 (1946-1949) 1953 EK1 Austria EK1

Neither the present system nor reliance on free enterprise will be sufficient. But the following four principles might provide the basis for a successful policy: that private ownership of dwellings is no worse than any other form of private property, provided it is not abused; that such State controls over rents and housing as are necessary should be impartial, efficient, and complete; that private enterprise, including building societies, can make a valuable contribution to any building programme, and that the allocation of dwellings to the homeless on party grounds is an arbitrary and undemocratic abuse of political power.

Apart from this one failure, which has been tolerated owing to the low rents paid by the majority, the social services provided in post-War Austria have maintained a very high level. According to statistics prepared by the International Labour Organization, on the basis of 1949 figures, Austria devoted a higher percentage of her national income to social purposes than any other country, except the Saar and West Germany, where the high proportion of refugees made conditions exceptional. This state of affairs, together with the Price-Wage Agreements, has been responsible for the peaceful development of the country under the most difficult conditions and for the complete failure of Communism to make progress in a society which between the Wars had been strongly influenced by the doctrines of Marx.

A number of social changes can, however, be observed in post-War Austria, though in some cases it is not yet possible to see whether they are of permanent or temporary significance.

The most obvious of these was the influx of a large number of refugees and displaced persons and the absorption of a proportion of them into Austrian society. The temporary effects of their arrival, during the months immediately following the War, have already been considered. By the end of 1951 UNRRA and the International Refugee Organization, which took over this problem from UNRRA in 1947, had helped more than a million refugees and displaced persons